

Message Text

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PAGE 01 KINSHA 01724 281551Z

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FROM US ECA DELEGATION

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: OCON, ECA

SUBJECT: ECA CONFERENCE OF MINISTERS MEETING KINSHASA-- NEW SPIRIT
OF COOPERATION

SUMMARY: PRESIDENT MOBUTU OPENED CONFERENCE ON FEBRUARY 24 WITH
SPEECH THAT REITERATED PREVIOUSLY EXPRESSED VIEWS. ADEDEJI
PRESENTED HARD HEADED ASSESSMENT OF AFRICAN POOR ECONOMIC PERFOR-
MANCE WHICH HAS SERIOUS IMPLICATIONS FOR POLITICAL AND SOCIAL
STABILITY. HE STRONGLY EMPHASIZED AFRICAN RESPONSIBILITY FOR ITS
ECONOMIC PAST AND FUTURE. HE CALLED ON AFRICAN STATES TO SUPPORT
ECA BOTH POLITICALLY AND ECONOMICALLY IN ITS ATTEMPTS TO ASSIST
IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE REGION. AMBASSADOR BOLEN'S SPEECH
WAS WELL RECEIVED BY AFRICAN DELEGATES AS WELL AS SENIOR ECA
OFFICIALS. CONFERENCE THUS FAR HAS BEEN BUSINESSLIKE AND HAS
AVOIDED DIVISIVE, POLITICALLY-ORIENTED RHETORIC. END SUMMARY.

1. PRESIDENT MOBUTU OPENED ECA CONFERENCE OF MINISTERS MEETING
AT TEN O'CLOCK ON FEBRUARY 24. IN HIS SPEECH, WHICH BASICALLY
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PAGE 02 KINSHA 01724 281551Z

REITERATED PREVIOUS POSITIONS, PRESIDENT MOBUTU STRESSED THE
IMPORTANCE OF SELF-RELIANCE FOR AFRICA AND THE NEED
FOR AFRICAN GOVERNMENTS TO SUPPORT ECA FINANCIALLY. HE ALSO
MENTIONED IN PASSING HIS PROPOSAL FOR AN ECONOMIC COMMUNITY FOR
AFRICA AND SUGGESTED A STUDY OF WAYS AND MEANS TO IMPROVE
COOPERATION BETWEEN ECA AND OAU.

3. EXECUTIVE SECRETARY ADEDEJI, IN HIS OPENING ADDRESS, PROVIDED A BLUNT ANALYSIS OF AFRICA'S POOR ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE OVER THE PAST 15 YEARS WHICH HAS SERIOUS IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE SOCIAL AND POLITICAL STABILITY THROUGHOUT THE CONTINENT. ADEDEJI CHARACTERIZED AFRICA'S ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE AS THE POOREST OF ANY REGION EXCEPT SOUTH ASIA. HE POINTED OUT THAT UNLESS BASIC CHANGES WERE MADE AFRICA'S PROSPECTS WERE BLEAK FOR THE NEXT 15 YEARS. CONSEQUENTLY, AFRICA FACES A DEVELOPMENT CRISIS OF GREAT PORTION. HE STATED THIS COULD AFFECT THE SOCIAL AND POLITICAL STABILITY OF THE REGION. ADEDEJI STRESSED THAT MUCH OF THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR POOR ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE RESTED WITH AFRICAN NATIONS THEMSELVES OWING TO INAPPROPRIATE AND MISGUIDED POLICIES AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL. EVEN IF A NEW INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC ORDER IS ACHIEVED, AFRICA'S BENEFITS WILL BE ONLY MARGINAL IF CURRENT AFRICAN POLICIES ARE CONTINUED. HE THEN CALLED FOR A NEW ECONOMIC ORDER AT THE NATIONAL AND REGIONAL LEVELS AS WELL AS THE INTERNATIONAL LEVEL. TURNING TO ECA'S ROLE IN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT, ADEDEJI STATED THAT ECA EFFECTIVENESS IN ASSISTING IN THE DEVELOPMENT AND MODERNIZATION OF AFRICA HEAVILY DEPENDS ON AFRICAN STATES THEMSELVES. ECA NEEDS THE POLITICAL SUPPORT OF AFRICAN STATES AS WELL AS RESOURCE CONTRIBUTIONS FROM THEM, WHETHER IN CASH OR IN KIND, IF IT IS TO ACHIEVE THE LEVEL OF PERFORMANCE OF WHICH IT IS CAPABLE AND WHICH AFRICAN STATES EXPECT. IN THIS CONNECTION HE NOTED THAT ALTHOUGH ECA IS A UN ORGANIZATION IT TAKES ITS BASIC POLICY GUIDANCE FROM AFRICAN NATIONS THROUGH CONFERENCE OF MINISTERS.

3. THE US STATEMENT, WHICH AMBASSADOR BOLEN PRESENTED ON FEBRUARY 25, WAS WELL RECEIVED BY THE CONFERENCE. NUMEROUS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 KINSHA 01724 281551Z

DELEGATIONS INCLUDING DELEGATES FROM SOMALIA AND ETHIOPIA WERE HIGHLY COMPLIMENTARY ABOUT THE SPIRIT AND SUBSTANCE OF THE STATEMENT. DR. ADEDEJI AND MR. GANAO, AMONG OTHERS IN THE UN FAMILY, WERE ALSO VERY COMPLIMENTARY ABOUT THE CONTENT OF THE US PRESENTATION.

4. THUS FAR THE CONFERENCE HAS BEEN VERY BUSINESSLIKE IN ITS DISCUSSIONS AND HAS NOT INDULGED IN DIVISIVE, POLITICALLY MOTIVATED RHETORIC. THOSE DELEGATIONS, SUCH AS ALGERIA AND TANZANIA, WHICH AT NAIROBI IN 1975 WERE VIGOROUS, OUTSPOKEN CRITICS OF THE DEVELOPED WORLD HAVE EITHER MADE NO STATEMENTS AT ALL OR HAVE LIMITED THEMSELVES TO ISSUES DIRECTLY RELATED TO THE AGENDA. THERE ARE NO DELEGATIONS FROM ANGOLA AND MOZAMBIQUE WHICH MAY ALSO PARTIALLY ACCOUNT FOR THE ABSENCE OF EXTREMIST RHETORIC. THE CONFERENCE IS BEING ATTENDED BY 37 MEMBER STATE REPRESENTATIVES.

5. COMMENT: AS REFLECTED IN THE FOREGOING, CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS THUS FAR ARE VERY ENCOURAGING. ADEDEJI'S STATEMENT

IN PARTICULAR HAD A SOBERING EFFECT ON THE CONFERENCE AS HE
PRESENTED AFRICAN DELEGATIONS WITH A REALISTIC ASSESSMENT OF
AFRICA'S PAST ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE AND THEIR OWN DIRECT RE-
SPONSIBILITY FOR THE SHAPE OF MUCH OF ITS ECONOMIC FUTURE.
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